

Accidental Code Red by the zesty lemon

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Friendship, Humor

Language: English

Characters: Dustin H., Eleven/Jane H., Mike W., Steve H.

Pairings: Eleven/Jane H./Mike W.

Status: Completed

Published: 2019-01-05 15:19:48

Updated: 2019-01-05 15:19:48

Packaged: 2019-12-12 20:00:51

Rating: T

Chapters: 1

Words: 3,329

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Dustin accidentally calls a Code Red and Steve can't catch a fucking break. (Hints of Mileven, but mostly Steve being a damn good babysitter).

Accidental Code Red

Steve Harrington was a simple guy, with simple wants and needs.

He *wanted* to put all the weirdness of the last few years behind him and regain a sense of normalcy that didn't involve thinking about the strange, dark, upside down that coexisted on some kind metaphysical mumbo jumbo of their world.

He *needed* to decide what he was going to do with his future because if his asshole dad tried to force him into one more stiff, pressed, blue-collar business suit he was going to put his head through a wall.

And lastly, Steve just wanted to get through the year without anything... *exciting* happening. The feeling of his beloved baseball bat gripped in his hands was far too fresh, and so was the ragged, desperateness of trying to get all the shitheads out of that goddamn hole before demo dogs swarmed them.

He was in no hurry to experience that kind of 'excitement' again.

But of course, that was too much to ask.

Steve spotted Eleven almost immediately on the drive home.

She wore a large flannel jacket, the hood pulled up in an attempt to look inconspicuous, but it wasn't nearly cold enough for that and instead it made her stand out more. The mop of unruly curls under the hood was a dead giveaway—as was the way she rode her bike—like a kid taking their first bike ride without the training wheels.

Eleven wasn't supposed to be out alone.

Steve knew this.

He knew *she* knew this.

And yet...

Here she was.

He sighed, watching Eleven first out of the passenger window and then in the rear view mirror.

For a fleeting moment he debated calling the Hop... but Steve Harrington wasn't a snitch. He couldn't imagine the kind of life that kid had before Hopper. She barely got to stretch her legs as it was, but he also understood that a lot of the safety precautions surrounding the teen were entirely necessary.

Steve made a decision. He wouldn't rat her out to Hopper. *This* time.

Just as Steve decided to let the psychokinetically powered girl be, something happened:

A dog shot out of the cornfield directly in front of Eleven's bike. She swerved jarringly to the left in an attempt to miss it before careening squarely into the thick, wire tether that anchored the power pole beside the gravel path. Eleven catapulted forwards, head over heels tumbling to the ground—face first and didn't get up.

"*Shit.*" Steve swore, slamming on the breaks. He reversed speedily back down the road and pulled over to the side.

He kicked the door open and sprinted around the side of the vehicle towards the dazed looking teen on the gravel path.

Eleven tried to stand up but Steve firmly but gently held her shoulder so she stayed put. She looked a up, startled by the sudden contact and Steve quickly removed his hands and held them up—realizing he'd made a huge mistake in not announcing himself. She could literally skin him alive if she very well wanted—he was a fool not to remember that.

"It's Steve Harrington, kid. Don't move. Are you okay?"

Her dark gaze swept over him and some of the tension melted from her shoulders when she realized she knew him.

It was a dumb question; blood was currently streaming from her nose at an alarming rate. Her forehead and chin sported nasty looking scrapes, full of gravel and dirt, her hands in a similar state, luckily it didn't look like she broke anything.

Eleven mulled over his question carefully.

"Yes." She finally answered, wiping her nose against the black bandana tied on her wrist in an all too practiced motion. She stopped—puzzled and reached up to feel the blood still streaming down her lip and chin. Steve could see the confusion and then panic start to build in her gaze and realized he needed to act quickly.

"It's okay kid, it's just a nosebleed." Steve injected calmness into his voice, "you hit your nose when you fell and that's a normal thing to happen. It's okay. It will stop soon." He explained evenly, watching the panic recede in her dark gaze.

She took a deep breath and nodded, trusting him. They hadn't interacted much, but Eleven knew Dustin trusted him and that was apparently good enough for her.

"You wait here—I have some tissue in the car. It will help." He added belatedly upon her quizzical look. "For now, I need you to pinch your nose... right here. It will help stop the bleeding." Steve demonstrated on himself, pinching just below the bridge of his nose.

Eleven copied the movement unsurely, but did as she was asked.

"Okay. I'm going to get that tissue. And I'll call Dustin okay?"

She nodded again and Steve jogged back to the car. He snagged the beat up old walkie-talkie out of the glove box while desperately searching for the roll of toilet paper he knew his old man kept in the car.

He popped the trunk and ducked back around the vehicle, there it was! Steve grabbed it and quickly headed back to Eleven.

The walkie-talkie was a present from Dustin just two months after the Hawkins Middle School Snowball for an "honorary party member." It was strangely touching to receive such a gift from Dustin, and Steve made sure to keep it charged and on him in the event of any... weirdness. Truthfully, Steve wanted Dustin to have a way to contact him easily in the event he ever needed him.

"Dustin. Come in. Over." Steve called into the walkie-talkie as he

jogged back to Eleven.

"Dustin." He repeated into the walkie-talkie, just as he realized Eleven wasn't sitting down anymore. She was standing up, frantically looking in the grass for something, blood streaming down her face.

"Whoa, whoa, keep pinching your nose and sit down, kid. What's the matter?" Steve asked worriedly.

"Birthday present. For Hop." Eleven's vocabulary was something that had drastically improved with homeschooling, but her fragmented, choppy form of speaking still came out in times when she was stressed or upset.

"Is this what you're looking for?" Steve spotted a smallish, craft paper package on the ground a little ways away. He picked it up, but winced when he heard the distinct sound of broken glass shift.

Eleven's face fell and for one horrid moment Steve thought she was going to cry. He really didn't know what to do if the psychokinetically super powered teenager started to bawl.

He wasn't *Mike Wheeler* for crying out loud.

"It's okay." He repeated, more for himself this time than for Eleven. "Let's deal with one thing at a time okay? Nosebleed comes first."

Eleven debated his words briefly before settling back on to the ground in apparent agreement. She couldn't hide the dejected look in her eyes as she stared down at the broken gift in her lap.

"Okay, here's the tissue."

Steve handed a wad of balled up toilet paper to Eleven just as the walkie-talkie crackled to life.

"Steve. It's Dustin. Come in. Over."

Steve made sure Eleven had a good grip on the wadded toilet paper before he turned his attention to the radio.

"Dustin," he decided to cut right to the chase, "El is hurt. She wiped

out pretty good. She's got a nosebleed and scraped her face, but nothing's broken."

"*Wait, what happened? Over.*" Dustin asked incredulously and Steve could practically see the puzzled expression that would be forming on the kid's face.

"El got a nosebleed because she wiped out." Steve repeated distractedly, quickly offering another wad of toilet paper to the girl. She accepted it thoughtfully, the intensity of her brown gaze always made him feel as though she could see right through him.

"*How? What happened?*" Dustin's voice crackled worriedly over the walkie-talkie, so worried he'd forgotten to say "over."

"A dog came out of nowhere. El swerved and hit the power pole wire and went flying." Steve explained, trying to not get impatient.

There was a slight pause.

"*Did she...*" The walkie-talkie crackled and Dustin's voice dropped for a moment. Steve absentmindedly whacked it and his voice started coming out fine again, "...*upside down?*"

Steve frowned. Why did the kid want to know that?

Whatever.

"I mean yeah. She flew pretty good," Steve thought of the way El had flown off her bike before face planting. At one point she'd been upside down for sure. Steve glanced at Eleven, who was holding a now blood-soaked sodden mess of tissue.

"Shit." He swore, "there's blood everywhere. Just get Hopper out here. We're by the Masons' cornfield just past the park."

Steve hardly finished talking before Dustin nearly screamed:

"OH MY GOD OH MY GOD! OKAY, I'LL PUT OUT THE CODE RED. DON'T MOVE. JUST PROTECT EL."

The walkie-talkie went dead.

Steve quickly wadded up some more toilet paper and passed it to El with a sigh.

Why did Dustin have to be so goddamn dramatic all the time?

...

It was scarcely ten minutes later when a huffing, puffing, sweaty Dustin skid to a stop shortly from where Steve and Eleven were sitting on the grass.

"El! Are you okay—*oh my god!*" Dustin stumbled off his bike, his eyes widening when he spotted the rather impressive pile of blood soaked toilet paper.

Eleven's nosebleed finally slowed to a sluggish trickle, clotting at last. There was a bruise forming on the bridge of her nose and the side of her cheek, but aside from the scrapes and bruises, Steve thought she was lucky.

Even the bike came out mostly okay—the only thing that broke was the birthday present meant for Hopper.

A mug, he learned. It said: *Mornings are for Coffee and Contemplation*, which was apparently something Hopper said frequently enough that when Eleven spotted the mug, she'd drafted the party to scrimp together enough money to help her purchase it.

"I'm okay." Eleven reassured Dustin, her voice nasal from pinching the bridge of her nose.

"Did you call Hopper?" Steve interrupted before Dustin could start firing off the inevitable slew of questions that would surely be tumbling from his mouth at any moment.

"Of course," Dustin said indignantly, offended. "I called everyone."

Steve stared at Dustin uncomprehendingly.

"What?"

"I called everyone." Dustin repeated, "I wouldn't leave something like

the upside down returning to just Hopper! He'll need all the help he can get. The guys are on their way. I even told Will to call Jonathan and Nancy."

Eleven's face went carefully blank; her dark eyes were suddenly chips of obsidian.

A shiver snaked across Steve's neck, but something didn't seem right. "The upside down? It's back? *How?*"

There was an uncomfortable pause.

Dustin stared at Steve like he sprouted a second head.

"That's what you said." Dustin said slowly, with a deep frown.

Steve frowned and shared a confused glance with Eleven.

"No I didn't."

"Yes, you did!" Dustin insisted, "when you radioed me on the walkie-talkie! You said something about a demo dogs and a nosebleed because of El's powers and the upside down. It was hard to make out because there was a lot of static but that's what you said!"

There was an even longer pause.

"I radioed you to tell you to call Hopper because Eleven got a nosebleed when she swerved to avoid a dog and hit a power pole Dustin. Not that there were *demo dogs* and *theupside down!*" Steve was trying to fight down the overwhelming senses that told him they were all about to be buried up to their necks in deep shit any minute now.

Dustin for calling a CODE RED and totally blowing the situation out of proportion, Eleven for being out by herself and getting hurt to boot and himself for harbouring her as a fugitive.

Steve words were still processing through Dustin's mind and he watched as the disbelief, confusion and finally sheepish resignation flit across his features.

"Oh shit." Dustin swore, "they're going to kill me, aren't they?"

Steve opened his mouth to respond but was cut off from answering by the sounds of sirens wailing in the distance. He sighed and glanced at Dustin and Eleven.

"Abso-fucking-lutely kid. All three of us are dead meat."

Eleven nodded in agreement.

"Son of a bitch." Dustin muttered.

...

Of course, everything went to hell immediately.

Just because he was Steve *fucking* Harrington and his luck was that *goddamn* good—everyone appeared almost at once and so there was no time to explain anything.

First, Hopper had come racing around the corner, tires squealing, siren shrieking, fishtailing to a stop just shy of Steve's dad's car. Then Joyce and Will Byers had appeared, practically flying around the other corner (Steve was fairly sure two of Joyce's wheels had left the pavement for crying out loud), Will holding on to the dashboard for his life. This was also the moment Wheeler, Max and Lucas had chosen to burst out of the cornfield, breathless and sweaty and immediately zeroed in on El's injuries.

It had been a very strange half hour blur of yelling over each other about demo dogs, the upside down, walkie-talkies, Eleven being out alone, and code reds. It was getting nowhere and Steve was pretty sure Wheeler would fret Eleven to death the way he was hovering like a mother hen.

Poor Dustin looked like he was going to pass out from how he was trying to explain to the entire group that the code red hadn't been a real code red.

"You're telling me this was a false alarm?" Hopper growled, eyes narrowing on Dustin's drooping shoulders.

Steve groaned and stood up. The kid hadn't meant to call a code red. Dustin truly believed that Steve had called to warn them about the upside down. It was a simple mistake. Time to get this shit-show over with.

Eleven beat him to it.

She stood suddenly, drawing the attention of everyone present. She shook a startled Wheeler off and poked Hopper in the chest, eyes blazing.

"You didn't tell me it was your birthday."

Hopper's words died in his throat and he blinked in confusion at the sudden change of topic.

"*What?*"

"Dustin said birthdays are special. *You* didn't tell me." She said it accusingly, like he'd deliberately withheld this important information from her.

The chief opened his mouth and closed it, realizing that today, was in fact, his birthday. In a way he had withheld the information, though not at all intentionally. Hopper didn't view his birthday as particularly important. For many years it was just another horrible day in the gray life of alcoholism and hazy depression after his little girl passed away.

"I forgot." He admitted truthfully.

Eleven narrowed her eyes and glanced suspiciously at Dustin as though to confirm that this was something that could happen.

Dustin shrugged. "Happens more frequently in old a—er... as you get older. You might forget things."

She seemed satisfied with that answer and held out the craft paper package for Hopper, who looked astonished.

"We got you a mug." There was no question as to whom she meant by 'we'. "It broke when I fell." Her shoulder slumped dejectedly and

finally Hopper realized this was his cue to snap out of it.

Steve hadn't witnessed 'teddy-bear Hopper' as Dustin so helpfully put it, but here he was, in all his shining glory as the previously terrifyingly angry chief of police melted into a great big bear hug with his adopted daughter.

"How did you learn what day my birthday was?" Hopper asked, his voice slightly muffled into the top of Eleven's head.

"Dustin told me to check your driver's license." Eleven responded, voice even more muffled by the chief's chest. Hopper chuckled.

Steve was loath to break up such a heartwarming moment, but it had to be done because everyone was finally quiet and no one was yelling over each other.

"Okay, first off: Happy Birthday Hopper." Steve nodded respectfully as everyone else quickly followed suit with a call of "Happy Birthday!"

"Second: let's get this situation straight." Steve held his hand up when Wheeler opened his mouth, and the kid snapped it back shut to allow him to speak.

"There were no sightings of demo dogs or the upside down. This was an accidental Code Red. When I called Dustin on the walkie-talkie, there was some static on his end and he misheard me. It sucks that this all got blown out of proportion, but Dustin's first instincts were to ask me to protect El before he called everyone." Hopper's lips twitched into a grudging ghost of a smile, his stern gaze flitting to Dustin momentarily.

"I'm sure Dustin will take some necessary steps with the rest of the party to ensure that this situation doesn't happen *again*." Steve nudged the younger boy.

"Absolutely. Sir. Hopper. Sir." Dustin cringed, stumbling over his words.

After a tense moment, Hopper gave Dustin a friendly clap on the shoulder. "You've got good instincts, kid. Thanks."

And just like that, the situation was diffused.

Joyce was quick to propose an impromptu pizza party at her house to celebrate Hopper's birthday (and also so they could tend to Eleven's injuries) and soon the entire group, including Steve found themselves in the Byers' home, eating greasy, cheesy pizza. Steve watched as Joyce attended to Eleven's injuries as the other kids excitedly chattered around her. Eleven didn't seem to every say much, but simply enjoyed the obnoxiously loud company and excitement of the kids around her.

"Code Black." Will announced simply, about twenty minutes later after a heated discussion. It was the simplest colour to coordinate with the upside down, and was only to be used in the utmost certainty of the reemergence of the upside down should it happen.

Everyone was unanimous on the decision and so it was done.

Steve found himself far more comfortable than he ought to ever be in the din of the Byers' home. He tuned out the incessant chattering teens, half watched Joyce and Hopper quietly (almost intimately converse), so Steve stopped paying attention to them because he felt as though he were intruding on something private. Overall, sitting here with this crazy group of shithead kids and their rag-tag team of adults... it was nice. Steve chuckled and relaxed.

He was still a simple guy with simple wants and needs. He still wanted to put all remnants of the upside down behind him and gladly never reach for his special bat (which he still kept under his bed) again. He still needed to figure out what to do about his job because he would drop dead before his asshole father pushed him into a stiff pressed suit.

But... maybe hoping that nothing strange or exciting would happen... well, he could live with a little excitement every once in a while.

...

Steve had this thought for only about forty minutes –right up until the exact moment Nancy Wheeler and Jonathan Byers burst into the house, yelling about the upside down and demo-dogs, weapons in

hand.

A/N: Just something that popped into my head a few months ago and I finally got around to finishing it! I love me my Steve being a damn good babysitter stories.

Thanks for reading!